

Nature Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • May/June 2013



Staycation

The buzzword of summer

Due to the budgetary belt-tightening many families are doing, "staycation" is, once again, the buzzword of summer. Just because you're cutting back on travel mileage doesn't mean you have to cut back on viewing pleasure. If you're looking for a day trip or an afternoon hike that's rich in nature viewing opportunities but cheap on the gas tank, look no further than your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation area.

The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is the Department of Conservation site that immediately comes to mind for many area walkers. In the quarter century the nature center has been open, millions have trod the facility's trails and enjoyed its outdoor beauty. The Ruth and Paul Henning Conservation Area, just off of Highway 76 in Branson, is another popular, and well walked, Department of Conservation-owned hiking area.

But these two sites aren't the only Department of Conservation areas where people can hike. Many people don't realize many Missouri Department of Conservation areas that are popular spots in hunting seasons have trails, too. For instance, the 772-acre Little Sac Woods Conservation Area in northern Greene County is known for deer and turkey hunting. It also has a network of clearly marked trails. The same can be said of the 3172-acre Bois D'Arc Conservation Area in Greene County, the 2502-acre Busiek State Forest and Conservation Area in Christian County, the 840-acre Compton Hollow Conservation Area in Webster County, and the 4360-acre Robert E. Talbot Conservation Area in Lawrence County. All of these are well-known hunting areas with lesser-known trail systems.

National Trails Day on June 1 is a great chance to explore these trails. You may think, with summer heat coming on, that autumn would be a better time to explore Department of

Conservation areas. Fall hiking can be fun, but an advantage to hiking now is that human traffic at many Missouri Department of Conservation areas is lighter. It's the interim period between hunting seasons. Spring turkey season is over and fall hunting seasons haven't begun. (Squirrel season is underway, but most squirrel hunters don't hit the woods until nuts ripen in fall.)

Also, now is when many species of birds, mammals, and reptiles are active. Trails run near or through locations that have forest tracts, food plots, ponds, open old field areas, and other sites that have good wildlife viewing potential. Most Missouri Department of Conservation areas are open 4 a.m. to 10 p.m., which means long summer days offer a wide window for hiking.

Finally, getting back to the staycation theme, you're not in a quandary about what to do with your family in the fall—you're looking for things to do now.

Here are a few hiking hints to help make your hike an enjoyable one. With the exception of the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and the Henning Conservation Area, most Department of Conservation area trails are not paved. Some trails follow old service roads while others are footpaths that wind through forested areas or on the edges of open areas. Some trails are easy to walk while others are a bit more overgrown than what you've probably walked on at heavily-used areas.

High socks will provide enough leg protection on most trails. Bring insect repellent to keep



Glade at Ruth and Paul Henning Conservation Area

ticks away. Know what poison ivy looks like because you may find it near some trails. Don't let these details scare you, they're actually part of the appeal. These opportunities bring you face-to-face with various types of plant, insect, and wildlife species.

Missouri Department of Conservation areas can be hiked in fall, winter, and spring, too, but hikers should be mindful of hunting activities taking place at these times of year. Information and brochures on most Department of Conservation areas in this part of the state can be found at the Missouri Department of Conservation's Southwest Regional Office at 2630 N. Mayfair Avenue in Springfield (417-895-6880) or at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center. Information can be found online at <mdc.mo.gov>.



The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation and Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna. From I-44, take exit 6, and turn south on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays.
Audubon Center hours vary.

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-629-3423 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Nature Connections Newsletter

To begin receiving the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To begin receiving the newsletter electronically by e-mail, go to mdc.mo.gov/node/257, click the "Subscribe by Email" box on the right-hand side of the page, and scroll down to "Nature Connections."

May Events

Flowers For Mom

May 9 • Thursday • Anytime 5:30–7 PM
Walter Woods Conservation Area
Registration required (ages 4–12)
Make your mom a special Mother's Day card and a special gift of a native wildflower! Please register early.

Resource Science at Work, Part 2

May 17 • Friday • 6–7:30 PM
Diamond Grove Prairie Conservation Area (Diamond, MO)
Registration required (ages 14 and up)
Discover the beauty, diversity, and essential role of tallgrass prairie wildflowers while hiking across Diamond Grove Prairie.

**Glade Day
and
Native
Plant
Sale**

**May 25
Saturday
10 AM–3 PM**

**Wildcat Glades
Conservation and
Audubon Center**

No registration required (all ages)

Join us to learn the "recipe" for a chert glade ecosystem in a fun-filled day. There will be scheduled activities and discovery stations along the trail. You will also have the opportunity to purchase native plants from the Missouri Wildflower Nursery.



June Events

Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day

June 8 • Saturday • 8 AM–Noon
Kellogg Lake (Carthage, MO)
No registration required (ages 15 and under must be accompanied by an adult)
Join us for the 12th annual Kellogg Lake Kids' Fishing Day. Registration starts at 8am at the pavilion and then it is on to the education stations and a morning of fishing fun. Bring your own pole; a limited number of loaner rods are available on a first-come basis. Bait stations will be placed around the lake. Make it a great day at Kellogg Lake Park with refreshments, prizes, and a chance for the kids to reel in a big one!

Resource Science at Work, Part 3

June 21 • Friday • 6–7:30 PM
Wah'Kon-Tah Prairie (2½ miles northeast of El Dorado Springs, MO)
Registration required (ages 14 and up)
Join us to hike across the tallgrass prairie to learn about animals both above and below ground that have adapted to this unique ecosystem. One of those fascinating creatures is the endangered and recently reintroduced American burying beetle.

Shoal Creek Cleanup

June 29 • Saturday • 8 AM–1 PM
Shoal Creek in Joplin, MO to Schermerhorn Park in Galena, KS
Registration required (Ages 10 and up accompanied by an adult)
Help us with a canoeing cleanup along Shoal Creek. Join various Missouri/Kansas conservation partners including Southwest Ozark Stream Teams, Missouri Department of Conservation, and Audubon Missouri for this event. A limited number of canoes will be available to adults and teens with canoeing experience.

We help people discover nature.

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO 65604 • mdc.mo.gov/node/288

May Events

Archery Shooting Basics

May 4 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the basics of archery shooting. We will cover things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more and then go shooting on the static archery range. You may bring your own bow to the program or use ours.

Shotgun Shooting Basics

May 11 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting and moving the shotgun and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before you arrive at the range.

Families Shoot For Free

May 12 • Sunday • NOON–4:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Join us in celebration of Mother's Day. Bring Mom along and all families shoot for free.

.22 Rifle Shooting Basics

May 18 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the joys of shooting one of the all-time favorite rifles—the .22 rifle. We will discuss rifle nomenclature, dominant eye, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, shooting positions, plus much more. You may use our rifles or plan to use your own. Please make sure your rifle is completely unloaded before you arrive at the range.

First Visit To The Range?

Be mindful of firearm safety rules. If your firearms are cased, transport them to the check-in area that way. If not, there are a few rules to observe. First, always control the muzzle of your firearm and remember, at Dalton, the safest direction to have your firearms pointed is up. Always make sure the firearm is unloaded and the action locked open **before** bringing it to check in. And finally, no concealed or holstered firearms are allowed on the range. By following these rules, everyone will be safe and have a great experience.

June Events

Handgun Shooting Basics

June 8 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (ages 18 and up)

Join us to discover the basics of responsible handgun ownership and the joys of shooting. We will cover safety, handgun nomenclature, sight picture, sight alignment, breath control, trigger squeeze, and much more. Please make sure your handgun is completely unloaded before arriving at the range. You may use our handguns if you prefer.

10th Annual Day at the Range And Outdoor Adventure Fair

June 15 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center will be closed to public shooting for the 10th Annual Day at the Range and Outdoor Adventure Fair for persons with disabilities.

This event is a partnership effort between the Southwest Center for Independent Living, The National Wild Turkey Federation, and Missouri Department of Conservation. If you know someone who is disabled who would enjoy a fun day outdoors shooting or fishing this is the event! For more information and/or to register online go to <SouthwestMissouriDayattheRange.com>.

Families Shoot For Free

June 16 • Sunday • NOON–4:30 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Join us in celebration of Father's Day. Bring Dad along and all families shoot for free.

Archery Shooting Basics

June 29 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Registration required (all ages)

Join us to discover the basics of archery shooting. We will cover things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance, and much more and then go shooting on the static archery range. You may bring your own bow to the program or use ours.



Holiday Closings

May 8 • Truman Day
May 27 • Memorial Day



To get to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, take US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road. Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

HOURS:

September 14–April 14

Monday and Thursday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

April 15–September 13

Monday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Thursday: 9 AM–7:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

FACILITIES AND FEES:

Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range fee: \$3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: \$3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3 per person per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: \$20 per hour plus \$3 per round of 25 clay targets

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-742-4361 or email <DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov> to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287



The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through a variety of natural communities. Call to schedule a naturalist-led program for your organized group.

CURRENT HOURS:

March 1–October 31

Building: Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Sunday: Noon–5 PM

Closed Monday

Trails: Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–9 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-888-4237 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to others.

Temporary Exhibits

May
Nature Photography
by **Dan Dulany**

June
Nature Photography of the Ozarks
by **David P. Filbeck**
<DFilbeckPhotography.com>

May Events

Spring Migrants

May 2 • Thursday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins April 16 (ages 7 and up)

Spring is a good time to view migratory songbirds. While some stay and nest here, others are just passing through on their way to northern breeding grounds. Join Volunteer Naturalist Myra Scroggs to walk the trails looking for birds following an introductory program. Bring field guides and binoculars if you have them.

May Events

Primitive Skills Series Flint Knapping Demonstration

May 5 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns for another primitive skills session. Watch him transform simple rocks into artistic and functional points similar to the ones used by early man for arrowheads and other tools. See the basics of flint knapping and try your hand at this age-old skill. Stop by anytime.

Badge Bonanza

May 7 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration begins April 16 (ages 5 and up)

Attention all scouting and youth organizations! Here's a program to help you earn nature badges on outdoor hazards, bugs, and more. Activities are also open to the public. Please, no younger siblings.

Birds Passing Through Warbler Walk

May 8 • Wednesday • 8:30–11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7 and up)

Here's another chance to see migrating warblers. They don't stay long, so learn to identify these passing birds with Volunteer Naturalist Charley Burwick. Program will consist of thirty minutes indoors followed by a guided trail hike. Bring field guides and binoculars if you have them.

Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

May 8 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

Conservation TEEN Club Nature Center Hike

May 11 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 12–17)

Join us as we hike the nature center trails and explore the five different natural communities found here. Bring your camera and enjoy being a junior naturalist for a day. Lunch and drinks will be provided. Please bring your water bottle.

Nature And The Arts Songs And Birds

May 16 • Thursday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 12 and up)

Local musician Bo Brown is well known for his musical talent but many may not know about his birding prowess. Drawing from his background in music, field biology, and primitive skills instructing, Bo will weave together a program featuring music, stories, images, and musings about birds, nature, and other outdoor pursuits during this special *Nature And The Arts* presentation cosponsored by the Greater Ozarks Audubon Society.

Babes In The Woods

May 17 • Friday • 10–11 AM

May 18 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 0–2)

Bring your children ages 0–2 for a guided nature walk with Volunteer Naturalist Dana Tideman. Bring a stroller and join the fun!

Close-Up Nature Photography

May 18 • Saturday • 9 AM–NOON

Registration begins May 1 (ages 15 and up)

Take a closer look at nature with Volunteer Naturalist Art Daniels to learn the techniques and equipment used for macro photography. Bring a 35mm or digital SLR camera, tripod, and any close-up equipment you have.

Beginning Fishing For Women

May 22 • Wednesday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration begins May 1 (women and girls ages 14–17 with an adult participant)

Have you been wanting to enjoy one of the Ozarks favorite outdoor activities and don't know where to start? Come and join us for an evening of instruction on basic fishing. The next evening, May 23 from 6:30–8pm, we will head to the ol' fishing hole and catch a few. In order to go fishing, you must attend this classroom component.

Conservation Kids' Club Humdingers

May 23 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 7–12)

Special guest Sarah Driver will join us for a look at Missouri's smallest and most energetic bird—the ruby-throated hummingbird. Learn how you can attract this winged jewel to your backyard during this humdinger of a program. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Hiking Club

May 25 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 18 and up)

Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam will lead a hike at Pleasant Hope Conservation Area. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is three miles and rated moderate in difficulty.

Medicinal And Edible Plants Of The Ozarks

May 28 • Tuesday • 5–6:15 PM or 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 15 and up)

Join Bob Liebert, owner of Teeter Creek Herbs and author of *Common Medicinal Herbs Of The Ozarks*, for an indoor program and guided hike to learn how Native Americans and early pioneers relied on plants for curing their ailments and feeding their families. His book will be available to purchase and to have autographed.

Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • mdc.mo.gov/node/287

Hiking Club

June 1 • Saturday • 8 AM–2 PM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 18 and up)

Explore the Homesteaders Trail on the Henning Conservation Area with Volunteer Naturalist Doug Gilliam. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. **Hike is approximately four miles and rated moderate to difficult.**

Trail Trivia

June 1 • Saturday • 9 AM–4 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Spend a couple of hours hiking and testing your nature knowledge to celebrate *National Trails Day!* Trek our trails and answer nature-related questions along the way. Stop by the nature center to pick up a question sheet and then return to check your answers and claim your prize.

Primitive Skills Series Fire And Flintstone

June 2 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 12 and up)

Volunteer Naturalist and primitive skills specialist Don Brink returns to demonstrate how to start fires without matches and butane. Afterward, try your hand at starting a fire the primitive way.

Our Nesting Birds

June 4 • Tuesday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins May 15 (ages 7 and up)

Early summer is a busy time for nesting birds. Come learn about commonly seen nesting birds, as well as some that are not so easy to spot, during this indoor and outdoor program.

Tree Pest Clinic

June 4 • Tuesday • 9 AM–1 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Do your trees have disease or insect problems? Bring infected twigs (at least 12" long), branches, or leaves to Urban Foresters for identification and a solution to your tree problems. Stop by anytime.

Photo Nature Walk

June 8 • Saturday • 1–4 PM

Registration begins June 1 (Ages 12 and up)

Bring your digital camera and join Volunteer Naturalist and photographer Bob Ball for a photo nature walk. We'll take pictures of plants, discuss tools and techniques, and review pictures afterwards.

Nature Underground

June 14 • Friday • 9 AM–NOON

No registration required (all ages)

Explore the hidden world beneath our feet as we team with the Springfield-Greene County Library to go "underground" during the library's summer reading program, *Dig into Reading*. Bring your entire family and have fun enjoying activities, stories, crafts, and more. Drop by anytime and plan on spending at least an hour. The Mobile Library will be present during the program so bring your library card.

June Events

Conservation TEEN Club Overnight Camping Trip

June 18–19 • Tuesday, 3 PM–Wednesday, 3 PM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 12–17)

Enjoy an overnight campout at Schell-Osage Conservation Area. We'll tour the area and fish the lakes for bass, bluegill, crappie, and catfish. If the fish cooperate, we'll even have a fish fry! Fishing equipment and bait will be provided or you may bring your own. Participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Transportation, food, and drinks will be provided. Additional equipment will be required.

Canoeing Basics For Women

June 22 • Saturday • 8–10 AM

Registration begins June 1 (women and girls ages 12–17 with an adult participant)

Come join us for a float on Lake Springfield. We'll go over some basic strokes before heading out to view the lake. We'll meet at the Southwood Access on Lake Springfield. Make sure to dress appropriately and bring water. You don't need a partner to attend.

Canoeing Basics For The Family

June 22 • Saturday • 10:30 AM–12:30 PM

Registration begins June 1 (families, ages 12 and up and an adult mentor)

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) and gain confidence maneuvering a canoe by attending this hands-on program. We'll go over basic strokes and safety before heading out on Lake Springfield. Dress appropriately and bring water. Meet at the Southwood Access on Lake Springfield.

For Adults Only Lake Springfield Float

June 22 • Saturday • 1:30–3:30 PM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 18 and up)

Come join us for a float on Lake Springfield. We'll go over some basic strokes before we head out to view the lake. Meet at Southwood Access on Lake Springfield. Make sure to dress appropriately and bring water. You don't need a partner to attend.

Nature Art With A Chinese Brushstroke

June 22 • Saturday • 1–2, 2–3, or 3–4 PM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 5 and up)

Art instructor and nature enthusiast Hing Wah Hatch will increase your powers of observation as she demonstrates, step-by-step, how to capture the essence of local plants and animals through Chinese-style painting. Stop by anytime between 1–4pm to observe. Participation will be limited to 12 students for the classes. Participants will go home with more nature knowledge and their own artistic masterpiece.

Conservation Kids' Club Firefly Fest

June 27 • Thursday • 8–9:15 PM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 7–12)

Those tiny specks of light that spark our imagination every summer are back! Bring your flashlight for some games and join the action for a special look at nature's own "festival of lights" with Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan. Please, no younger siblings and only one adult per group of kids.

Little Acorns

Please limit to one per month.

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

May Events

Turtle-Mania

May 11 • Saturday • 11 AM

May 22 • Wednesday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

Don't be stuck in your shell all spring! Come explore the world of snappers, sliders, cooters, and more.

Bigmouth Bullfrogs

May 24 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

May 25 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

From tadpoles to adult bullfrogs, we'll learn the life changes of frogs and why they are such good leapers.

Roly-Poly Roundup

May 29 • Wednesday • 11 AM or 1 PM

Registration begins May 1 (ages 3–6)

Hey, partners, join the roly-poly fun as Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan returns for this year's roundup!

June Events

Amazing Armadillos

June 7 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

June 8 • Saturday • 10:30 AM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 3–6)

Join us on this armadillo adventure and find out what is so amazing about these armored animals.

Let's Go Camping

June 21 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

June 22 • Saturday • 11 AM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 3–6)

Camping can be fun for all ages! Join us at our indoor campsite to experience what it's like to spend a night in the woods. You'll sit in a tent, toast some pretend s'mores, and gather around the campfire for a story.

Nature's Nightlights

June 28 • Friday • 11 AM or 1 PM

Registration begins June 1 (ages 3–6)

Summer evenings will be filled with magic and fun when your little ones discover fireflies with Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan.

Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • mdc.mo.gov/node/290



The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

FACILITY HOURS:

Memorial Day–Labor Day

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–6 PM

Remainder of Year

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM

AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:

4 AM–10 PM

The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-334-4865, Ext. 0, to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

FISHING LAKE TANEYCOMO:

Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure of the entire lake including fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit mdc.mo.gov/node/5603.

Hiking at the Hatchery

Spring and summer make a great time of year to hike trails in southwest Missouri. We enjoy having people hike one or more of the trails at the hatchery. Each one is a little bit different and gives any hiker the chance to see the wonders of the Ozarks.

One of the best trails is the 0.4-mile White River Corridor Trail. This easy trail showcases a variety of wild plants and gives hikers the opportunity to rest on two large boardwalks. This summer hopes to see a new foot bridge installed over outlet #3 and the chance to see trout jumping up the fish ladder this fall. The 0.3-mile Canebrake Trail gives hikers the chance to see Lake Taneycomo, a small waterfall, and a large corridor of river cane. Related to bamboo, this cane is a native species and gives an almost “jungle” look on this easy trail. The 0.4-mile Fisherman’s Loop is a favorite of many outdoor enthusiasts. In addition to being a way to access Taneycomo, it provides the chance to see roosting vultures along the lake. This easy trail also features a variety of wildflowers and trees. The longest and most challenging trail is the 1.6-mile White River Bluff Trail. This trail provides a great chance to see the rugged Ozarks landscape, an oak/hickory forest and a patchwork of open glade habitats. The trail is also home to our Geocache site.

We hope that you plan to visit the Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery soon and bring both a fishing pole and your hiking boots. If the fish are not cooperating, the trails will definitely make your day.

– John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager

Family Fishing Fair

Saturday, June 8

9 AM–2 PM

*No registration required
(families, ages 15
and under may fish)*



Come to the Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center for our annual **free** event where you get to fish in a stocked pond and learn how to be a better angler. In addition to being able to go fishing with your family, several activity stations will help you learn how to tie knots, fillet and cook fish, bait and fly-cast, rig up a pole, make fish print art, and fish ethically. Free goodie bags will be given to every kid and there will be a drawing for a free rod/reel combo at the end of the day. There will be a limited number of loaner fishing poles, but you won’t have to wait if you bring your own pole and cooler. The *My First Fish* station is for anyone who catches their very first fish. Bring your first fish to this station and you will have your photo taken and a certificate will be mailed to you. At noon there will be a special performance by the Fishin’ Magicians who will introduce you and your family to the importance of water resources and amaze you with their fun magic. Call for more details.

May and June Events

Scissors, Paper, Rock

May 11 • Saturday • 10 AM–NOON

Registration required (families)

Come learn the art of collecting, pressing, and preserving plant life. Once pressed, these plants can be used for both identification and art. Each family gets to take home their very own portable field press. The program will involve a short hike to identify and explain what plants should or should not be collected.

Outdoor Photography

June 22 • Saturday • 10 AM–NOON

Registration required (families)

Here is your chance to learn how to take better photos in nature. Local photographers will share tips on how to take and create breath-taking photos of natural items. Each participant will take photos, and we will show all photos to learn what was done well and how to possibly make improvements. Bring your digital camera so that you take photos to share and learn how to become a better nature photographer.



Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • mdc.mo.gov/node/257

Helping Families Discover Fishing in Southwest Missouri

Spring fever tends to get contagious this time of year and families all over southwest Missouri start gearing up to head outdoors. One of the easiest and most convenient ways families can spend time together outside this spring is to go fishing. Casting a line into one of the many ponds, lakes, and streams that southwest Missouri has to offer is a great cure for spring fever and gives your family the chance to hook into quality fish—and memories. Each year, the Missouri Department of Conservation helps families discover the fun of fishing by providing multiple special events that promote family fishing.

During most of the year, Missourians are required to purchase a fishing permit to fish public waters, except of course any person 15 years of age or younger, a Missouri resident 65 years of age or older, or a person with certain disabilities. There is one weekend each year, however, when Missourians and non-Missourians alike can fish for free. During *Free Fishing Days*, which is offered annually by the Missouri Department of Conservation, no fishing permit is required to fish Missouri's public waters. This year, *Free Fishing Days* fall on June 8 and 9. If you don't have a fishing permit, but would like to try fishing one of Missouri's productive waters, *Free Fishing Days* is your chance to try. Whether you are new to fishing or have fished before but haven't cast a line in a while, this is your chance to hit the waters for free and discover, or rediscover, why Missouri is a great place to fish. *Free Fishing Days* is also a great opportunity for families to fish together at one of the special events the Department of Conservation holds during that weekend.

In addition to *Free Fishing Days*, the Missouri Department of Conservation organizes multiple free kids' fishing events in southwest Missouri that are specifically designed to introduce children to fishing. These events are the perfect opportunity for parents and grandparents to take their children or grandchildren fishing and teach them a lifelong skill that will provide enjoyment and appreciation of the outdoors for years to come. See below for a listing of all kids' fishing events being held this spring and summer in southwest Missouri.

— Dave Woods, Fisheries Management Biologist

Kids love fishing!

Kids' Fishing Day

May 4 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

Bennett Spring Hatchery and State Park (Lebanon, MO)

Call 417-532-4418 for details

Kids' Fishing Day

May 18 • Saturday • 6:30 AM–8:15 PM

Roaring River State Park (Cassville, MO)

Call 417-847-2430 for details

Kids' Fishing Fun Day

June 1 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

Sportsman's Park (Springfield, MO)

Call 417-864-1049 for details

Kids' Fishing Day

June 8 • Saturday • 8 AM–NOON

Kellogg Lake (Carthage, MO)

See page 2 for details

Family Fishing Fair

June 8 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM

Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery (Branson, MO)

See page 6 for details



The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

HOURS: Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
Closed all state holidays

PHONE: 417-895-6880



Free Fishing Days June 8 and 9

Any person may fish state waters without permit, trout permit, and prescribed daily tag during *Free Fishing Days*. It's the perfect opportunity to try a new sport or introduce someone to fishing. Special permits still may apply at some county, city, or private areas.

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to hunt and fish.

25

years

The nature center will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary in October, and we want to hear from you. Do

you have a special story and/or photo you'd like to share? Please send stories, remembrances, and photos by e-mail to <SprfdNatureCenter@mdc.mo.gov> or drop copies by the front desk. Stories and photos may be used in special anniversary programming and exhibits and will not be returned. Thank you.

New at the Nature Center

Beginning June 1, you can blend technology with nature by using your cell or smart phone to access seasonal interpretive messages along the Boardwalk Trail or learn about the natural communities found along the outer loop.

Missouri Department of Conservation



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Available at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and Southwest Regional Office.

Conservation Area Showcase:

Little Sac Woods Conservation Area

LOCATION: Little Sac Woods Conservation Area (Little Sac) is located on 772 acres in northern Greene County, approximately nine miles northwest of Springfield. It is west of Highway 13 and just south of Greene County Highway BB on Farm Road 115.

ABOUT THIS AREA: Little Sac was purchased by the Conservation Commission in 1979 and is predominately forested with scattered old fields and a few wildlife food plots. The northern portions of the area are where most of the old fields and food plots are located. Little Sac may be accessed from two parking lots. One is on the east side off of Greene County Farm Road 115 and the other is on the southwest corner of the area on Greene County Farm Road 36. Both parking lots provide a bulletin board where users may find an area brochure. In the brochure, you will find the area regulations along with a map of the hiking trail system that is a feature of Little Sac. Little Sac has a network of marked hiking trails that meander through forests, woodlands, glades, and open fields. Some trails follow service roads while others may be slightly overgrown and cross small creeks, so good hiking shoes are a must. If you take your time and travel quietly on these trails you may be able to see deer, turkeys, squirrels, and other wildlife on your hike.

There are a few small ponds, or watering holes, scattered throughout the area along the trails that may be good places to view wildlife or to find their tracks. These trails also provide a great opportunity for bird watching and wildflower viewing, so bring your binoculars. In addition to wildlife viewing opportunities, some of the trails have other interesting features. The Thong Tree Trail is named for a strangely-shaped tree. You will find this tree near the west starting point of the trail on the south side. A thong tree is a tree that Native Americans intentionally shaped to point to sources of water, campsites, and other important stopping points. While still a young sapling, the tree was bent to a horizontal position and held that way by forked sticks called thongs to give them their characteristic shape. This tree along the trail is not old enough for a "true" thong tree but it still has the shape of one. Another interesting feature on Little Sac is just northeast of where the Thong Tree Trail and Boundary Trail meet in the open field. There is a small plantation of cedar trees from Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado. This was a research project in the 1980s to determine what source of red cedar would grow well in Missouri. The project has been completed and now there is a dense stand of red cedar that provides some shelter for wildlife. Little Sac trails also provide the opportunity to view some of the habitat management on the area. Informative signs are placed to describe some activities such as timber stand improvements (TSI), woodland restoration thinnings, and glade management that are being conducted to help improve the habitat and the health of the forest.

FISHING: Little Sac has limited fishing opportunities. A small portion of the Little Sac River crosses the northwest corner of the area, but a steep bluff and the distance from the southwest parking lot make access very difficult. There are several small ponds on the area, but they are very shallow and only provide watering holes for wildlife.

HUNTING: The small amount of open land acres are managed for early successional species. This is intended to provide suitable habitat for bobwhite quail, woodcock, rabbit, deer, and turkey. Turkey hunting on the area can be good at times, especially if one hunts during the middle of the week and stays until the 1 p.m. closure in the spring season. Hunters need to keep in mind that Little Sac may receive heavy hunting pressure so most gobblers have been called to or spooked, so hunters should use more subtle and patient tactics. Fall turkey hunting can be good as well, as it may receive less hunting pressure than it does during the spring. Deer hunting may be good, but hunting pressure may be heavy during the firearms portions of the season. Deer hunting is permitted under statewide seasons and limits except archery antlerless and firearms antlerless permits may not be used. Little Sac is also closed to firearms deer hunting during the urban and antlerless portions of the firearms deer season. Please consult the *Hunting and Trapping Regulations* summary and the *Fall Deer and Turkey* booklet for detailed regulations.

For more information about Little Sac Woods, visit the website at <mdc.mo.gov/a7940>.

— Rod Tucker, Forestry Regional Supervisor